

Editorial

The International Conference on Life Cycle Assessment (*InLCA*)

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It is with great pleasure that we, along with the editors of the *International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment* (Int J LCA), bring you this special issue of selected papers from the International Conference and Exhibition on Life Cycle Assessment (*InLCA*). In April 2000, the EPA, with co-organizer IERE, held the *InLCA* conference that attracted over 265 attendees (approximately half were from North America) and ten exhibitors. Over 70 presentations were made during the course of the three-day meeting. The program and one-page abstracts are available at IERE's website: www.iere.org.

To keep the burden on presenters at a minimum, the conference organizers decided to require that only abstracts, not full papers, be submitted for the proceedings. Later, all the presentations were considered for publication as full papers in this special issue. Selection was mainly based on the results of evaluation sheets that were completed by the attendees of *InLCA*, where we asked which presentations they would like to see more information. We also gave preference to presentations that dealt with methodology development or in some way discussed the advancement of conducting LCA, such as improved modeling or software tools. From this process came the articles that are contained in this issue. Authors were asked to capture the presentations that they made in April and provide a full manuscript, however some chose to update their material, including some title changes.

Our thanks go to the other members of the advisory group, especially Dr. James Fava, of Five Winds International, and Ron Williams, of the General Motors Corporation, for their help in crafting the technical program. Thanks also to Dr. Walter Klöpffer for his interest in creating this issue as a follow on to *InLCA* and to Almut Beate Heinrich for her work in preparing the series of articles. And a special thank goes to Alina Martin of SAIC (pictured on the cover) for her diligence and unflagging efforts to organize and run the conference.

Since April 2000, we have had many inquiries about when the next version of *InLCA* will be held. Allan Astrup Jensen is leading the charge to hold a Life Cycle Management workshop in Copenhagen, August 27-29, 2001 (<http://www.lcm2001.org/>). At *InLCA* we had suggested Seattle as a pos-

sible location for the 2002 meeting but it seems to be too far west for some. We are now looking at Chicago, for a more convenient location for the October 2002 meeting.

An important part of the *InLCA* conference was the closing session where open discussion allowed attendees to express their views about the conference format and preferences for future meetings. There was general agreement that LCA is poised to take off as a technique with many applications. Many attendees expressed a concern over the proliferation of meetings by various societies and organizations that include LCA presentations or sessions. It is difficult, if not impossible, to attend all LCA-related meetings and at times the schedules conflict. Many stated a strong desire for a central LCA conference that is offered on a regular, on-going basis. Such a central LCA conference would allow for face-to-face contact and exchange of information between LCA practitioners and decision-makers who want to apply LCA.

LCA has yet to find a suitable home from which a dedicated conference can be coordinated. In the early to mid-90's, the Society of Environmental Toxicology & Chemistry (SETAC) acted as a catalyst for workshops and discussions. While SETAC-Europe continues to have a robust agenda for LCA during their annual meetings as well as active workgroups, it is still only one small part of a large agenda. SETAC-North America also continues with some LCA involvement but to a much smaller degree. Over the years, other organizations, most prominently IEEE and SAE, have increased LCA within their annual meeting programs. While such discussions of LCA applications within specialized areas are to be commended and encouraged, there is still a need to hold an international conference dedicated to the development and practice of LCA.

In 1997, Dr. Walter Klöpffer invited open discussion on the need for an international society for LCA to serve as a public mouthpiece (Int J LCA, Vol 2, No 1). Not much interest for the idea arose at the time, possibly because the ISO 14000 standards process served the function of assembling the experts and providing a place for exchange of ideas. With the completion of the initial series of LCA standards, we once again face the dilemma of not having a 'home' for LCA. Perhaps it is time to reintroduce the idea of an International Society of LCA.

Hope to see you in Copenhagen in August!